

The Challenge

The Army does not pick its missions and must, therefore, remain capable across the full spectrum of requirements, as a member of the joint team effort. Whether in response to a call for humanitarian assistance in unfamiliar geographic and cultural circumstances, forward deployed in a deterrent role, or engaged in conventional combat, soldiers are at the point of decision. Visible presence on the ground and the inherent capabilities of Army organizations are vital for the satisfactory accomplishment of the mission, however long the task may take.

There is a natural tension in performing these diverse missions. We must sustain a sufficiently robust force that is trained and ready to fight and win a major regional conflict while at the same time using selected capabilities inherent to our Army—combat forces, military police, engineers, psychological operations, civil affairs, transportation, medical—to promote long term regional stability and support peace operations.

This tension is not new; we have experienced it throughout our history. During the Cold War our missions were not as diverse and our force structure was more robust. Today, our reduced force structure must meet the increased demands imposed by the nation while remaining prepared to fight and win our nation's wars.

Despite its smaller size, our military must retain an appropriate mix of forces and capabilities to provide the versatility to handle today's challenges and to provide a hedge against unanticipated threats.

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